

FAIR TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 3 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, you've heard it a lot of different ways this morning. Our challenge is not that we tax too little. Our challenge is that we spend too much, and we're taking steps to make that happen. But we do tax incorrectly. We do tax in a way that challenges the patience, the tolerance and the intellect of millions of Americans every year. We're coming up on that.

One week from today is Tax Day, April 15, that day that folks dread year after year after year after year. One of the things that makes Tax Day so complicated is the exceptions, the exemptions, the loopholes and those special favors that get written into the Code year after year after year after year.

I want to associate myself with the comments from the previous speaker, the gentleman from California. And we've talked about the very serious—the very serious—discussion of the budget that's been going on in the Budget Committee. I'm pleased to be a member of the Budget Committee.

Bloomberg came out with a report this morning, \$2.9 trillion in special tax breaks, loopholes and exemptions erased in that budget. Not that taxes go up for Americans, but that taxes get simpler for Americans and fairer for Americans by taking away \$2.9 trillion in special favors and special exemptions.

There's a proposal that goes even further, and I want to mention it now a week out from Tax Day, and that's H.R. 25, the Fair Tax. It's a bill that started with only two cosponsors, one Democrat and one Republican. It grew to two Democrats and two Republicans, and then it grew to four Democrats and four Republicans. Now there are 60 cosponsors in the House, five in the United States Senate, the most widely cosponsored fundamental tax reform bill in this Congress.

And it does this: It abolishes income taxes and replaces them with consumption taxes, because the power to tax is the power to destroy. And what we destroy in this country is productivity. We're the only OECD country on the planet that doesn't have a consumption tax, the only one that punishes our producers instead of taxing our consumers. And it eliminates not \$2.9 trillion in loopholes as the budget does, but 100 percent of every corporate loophole.

We've heard it on this floor again and again: Loopholes for oil companies, loopholes for this company. It eliminates every single corporate tax break in existence today. And it eliminates them for individuals as well in favor of a simple, low-rate personal consumption tax.

On Tax Day, we talk about the income tax. The largest tax 80 percent of American families pay is the payroll tax. Everybody in here who's got a job

has seen that FICA line. You may not add it up, but it is the largest tax that 80 percent of Americans pay. And there is not a single bill on this floor that deals with that except the Fair Tax, which abolishes that tax so you get to keep what you earn so that nobody touches your paycheck before you do.

As you finalize your tax forms over the next 7 days on your way to April 15, I want you to think about what could be different. I want you to think about how, with the passage of H.R. 25, April 15 could just be another spring day.

CUT SPENDING AND GROW THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK) for 3 minutes.

Mr. HECK. Mr. Speaker, I have said, like most in this Chamber, that I oppose a government shutdown. Last November, Nevadans spoke. The American people spoke. They said cut the spending so the economy can grow.

My primary goal is not a government shutdown. It is to do the job that the people elected me to do: cut the spending and grow the economy.

Quite simply, our country is broke, all because there are checks in the checkbook doesn't mean there's money in the checking account. And we're paying the overdraft fees with money that we're borrowing from China.

Some people ask: What's the difference between a billion here and a billion there? Well, that's just \$1 billion that we don't have. There is an old saying: Take care of your pennies, and your dollars will take care of themselves. For those who question the importance of a billion dollars, I would say, take care of your billions, and your trillions will take care of themselves.

DEMOCRATS FAILED TO PASS A BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY) for 3 minutes.

Mr. DUFFY. First of all, I think many of us here in this House want to see the government to continue to be funded. But let's review what has happened here.

Last year, the Democrats failed to pass a budget. They failed to propose a budget. So this Congress, we're here doing the work of last year's House and Senate.

We proposed a bill to fund the government, and in that bill, we cut \$61 billion. That is under the backstop of the fact that we're going to borrow \$1.6 trillion this year alone. Our national debt is \$14 trillion. The Democrats in the Senate say they don't like our proposal.

That's okay. If you don't like it, pass your own proposal. Give us a counterproposal, and we will consider it. But the bottom line is the Senate has failed to act. They haven't sent us a counterproposal.

So what we've done is we've passed two extensions to fund the government, and again yesterday we passed a third. The Senate isn't going to take it up.

Again, if you don't like our proposal, give us your own. We can't negotiate with ourselves. We're willing to sit down and talk, but we can't continue to put out our proposals and our ideas and have you fail to give us a response.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Your Word, Lord God, calls us to reform and spiritual renewal. "Where your heart is, there is your treasure." The transformation You ask of us is not a change only of our manners or way of doing things. It is not a call for a change of language, the bottom line or even our thinking.

Rather, You Lord, who are hidden from our sight, know the hidden secrets of the heart. So You continually seek conversion of heart until, at last, our hearts rest only in You.

In such a changing world, unless we are willing to change our deepest desires according to Your Spirit of life and love, we will instead be changed by forces around us. Send forth Your powerful Spirit that You may have Your way with us both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.